

# Rosebud County Range Committee

February 6~Forsyth USDA Office~7:00 pm

**Attendees:** Don Bailey, Dave Davenport, Daryl Grogan, Bobbi Vannattan, Laurie Kelley, Lynn Ashley and Amy Adler.

**Minutes:** The minutes were approved by consensus.

**Treasury:** The balance of the account is \$1,246.16.

**Range Tour:** Dave Davenport told the group that he is going to talk to a fellow who ranches out of Billings. The ranch specializes in grass fed beef. He will find out if he would like to come and talk to the group about their process and what they are doing on the ranch. Dave is going to talk to a guy in Billings about grass fed beef. He wants to see if this guy will come to talk to the group about their process and what they are doing on the ranch. The ranches website is: <http://www.lacensemontana.com/> .

Dave said that organic is the big draw now, because of the risk of cancer from the things that go into sprays, etc, but it's nearly impossible to do here. Grass fed beef might be a reasonable alternative to that. Dave said that it would save machinery costs.

Lynn: cows eat corn and soybeans at different times of the day and they gain a tremendous amount of weight doing that. He said we need to include speakers who will talk about the grasses and the genetics.

Donny: even if a landowner didn't want to get into the cattle business they could rent their pasture to the people that do. Fuel and machinery cost savings are considerable especially now.

Daryl: The concept would have to be sold to the producers.

Amy: cost share money from NRCS has really increased irrigation pivot's cost effectiveness.

Dave: anything beats buying \$200,000 tractors.

Donny: at this rate, fuel costs are going to eliminate the middle class of family farms. I might not want to have an irrigated pasture for my cows, but I might want to put them on one. Donny said that in his opinion, oil companies are going to let the average guy invest in ethanol plants and then lower the price of oil and drive them out of business. Then they can buy the plants for a few cents on the dollar.

Dave: Tony Malburg gave a talk in Colstrip and said he sold all his cows because they were in bad shape financially. He took in all yearlings and made it a profitable operation. Now in the winter he can do what he likes.

Amy: we should get Byron Hould extension agent to come and join the group.

Lynn: we should contact the Tall Grass Association. He will make the call. Lyonelle Ashley would be a good one to talk at the tour and Lynn will talk to him as well.

Donny: South Devon's have some qualities that we need in this country: very maternal and they have great carcasses. A study is being done where they put computer chips in cow's heads. The chips record every time the cow dips their head into the feeder. They can tell a lot by doing that. There's a lot to be learned about grass fed cattle, rather than silage fed. The cows may need to learn to eat the grass. Donny said they learned a way around losing calves to pine needles; he feeds them at 2 or 2:30. It's natural for them to eat that time of day and he thinks that is the reason they go eat pine needles even if they are full.

Amy: a fall tour would be better because there will be more time to put together an interesting agenda. We want good speakers so that we give out good information and get people to come to the next one.

The group set the tour date. It will be held on September 6. It would be good to get useful information to the people of this area. There are great ideas out there being used in other areas, and we should be using them.

The next planning meeting will be held on March 5.

Ideas for the tour:

- ~~put the county tent up and have it someplace outside
- ~~Isabell Bills in the common area
- ~~Haugo Center
- ~~Country Club

Names to add to the contact list:

Casey and Courtney Kluver—Bobbi will get the address  
Scott Egan—Laurie has his contact information

**Open Mike:** There were no open mike comments.